

Behavioral Health is Essential To Health



Prevention Works



Treatment is Effective



People Recover



Guidelines for Providers: Recommended Strategies for Outreach to and Engagement of People Living with Serious Mental Illness



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
Center for Mental Health Services
Office of Consumer Affairs
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Triialogue Meeting, July 2014

Purpose: To identify effective strategies for improving outreach to, and engagement of, people who are living with serious mental illness

Participants:

- People living with serious mental illness/Peers
- Family Members
- Providers/Community Stakeholders

Triologue Meeting (cont'd)

Target population: Individuals among the hardest to reach, including

- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- Those who identify as LGBTQ
- Veterans
- Those living in rural areas
- Those in faith communities
- Transitional age youth
- Older adults

Strategies Identified

Two types of strategies:

- Global strategies appropriate for the overall population
- Strategies specific for:
 - Those involved in the criminal justice system
 - Those who identify as LGBTQ
 - Veterans
 - Those living in rural areas
 - Those in faith communities
 - Transitional age youth
 - Older adults

Global Strategies

Strategies that serve individuals with serious mental illness should:

- **Be culturally competent**
- **Use welcoming language**

There was consensus that terms such as case manager, which may be perceived as impersonal and hierarchical, be replaced with terms that are person centered such as peer, advocate, liaison.

- **Offer a welcoming environment**

Does thick glass in an intake window separate staff from the person? The perception may be, “Ahhh! The staff is nice and safe but I’m not”.

- **Take a holistic approach with people receiving services such as an integrated practice environment**

Global Strategies (cont'd)

- **Focus on basic human needs first:** food, clothing, housing, etc. Two model programs that can be replicated:
 - The **PATH** program asks what clients want to work on first: housing, unemployment, partial employment, or something else? When they decide what they want to work on, they're engaged.
 - The **Housing First** approach centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing quickly and then providing services as needed.

Global Strategies (cont'd)

- **Draw on faith-based services and supports**, when available.
- **Enlist peers**, whose value cannot be underestimated. Information about the [Intentional Peer Support Model](#) can be found online. [Peer Core Competencies](#) can be found on Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale TA Center Strategy (BRSS TACS) website.
- **Get workers out of the office and into the streets.**
- **Include training at all levels (practitioners, staff, peers) in:**

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| • Recovery orientation | • Trauma-informed care |
| • Person-centered care | • Safety |

Global Strategies (cont'd)

Educate the larger community, including:

- Family and friends about mental illness and addiction in order to lift the “cloak of shame”
- Community leaders, insurers, and educators about the **Community of Good Practice Model**. Examples can be found online through
 - [ABCD \(Asset Based Community Development\) Institute](#)
 - Bruce Anderson’s [Community Activators](#)
- The general public about [Mental Health First Aid](#), a public education program
- Law enforcement departments on [Crisis Intervention Team \(CIT\) training](#)

Global Strategies (cont'd)

- **Develop community partnerships.** Outreach and engagement efforts can be extended beyond the mental health field to include trained school personnel, Meals on Wheels volunteers, and others.
- **Include mental health interests consistently at policy planning tables:** organizational leaders, providers, and people with lived experience.
- **Enlist champions.**

Strategies Specific to Those Involved in the Criminal Justice System

- **Incorporate an integrated care approach** that includes family (as defined by the person receiving services), representatives from the criminal justice system, and police.
- **Use of specialized mental health court dockets.** These are modeled after “drug courts” that strive to rehabilitate and divert the criminal justice system.
- **Use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT).** AOT is a legal mechanism by which a court orders an individual to undergo outpatient treatment. AOT should be used as a last resort to get people into, and help them remain in, treatment long enough to sustain recovery.

Strategies Specific to Those Who Identify as LGBTQ

- **Use a trauma-informed approach**, and train all outreach staff.
- **Create a culturally sensitive environment**
 - Design LGBTQ-friendly spaces, including gender-neutral bathrooms.
 - Use language that is friendly and respectful.
 - Establish a judgment-free zone. Effective engagement depends on meeting individuals where they are and withholding judgment and shock. Staff doing outreach work should be mindful of reactions when they meet a person identifying as LGBTQ.

Strategies specific to Those Who Identify as LGBTQ

- **Recognize that people identifying as LGBTQ may have mental health issues unrelated to gender issues.**
- **Create safe environments by welcome community policing.**
- **Hire individuals who are LGBTQ as peer specialists and recovery coaches and use in outreach and integrated services and supports.**

Strategies Specific to Veterans

- **Use peers.** Research shows a 50% reduction in recidivism (treatment, symptoms, criminal justice etc) among veterans who receive peer services and supports.
- **Use veterans' treatment courts,** which focus on veterans with criminal justice involvement.
- **Use services and funding available to veterans.** Veterans represent a large percentage of people experiencing homelessness, and many programs exist to help them. [Federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing \(VASH\)](#) vouchers are available in every state.

Strategies Specific to Those Living in Rural Areas

- **Utilize incentives to recruit and retain the workforce from within rural areas.** This practice could help address the lack of behavioral health providers in remote areas.
- **Consider how to structure and deliver culturally competent training and preparation for rural providers.**

Strategies Specific to Those in Faith Communities

- **The Black church, especially, offers opportunities to deliver mental health services and supports to the community, especially in areas where African-Americans are deeply involved in their faith.**
 - One program worthy of being replicated is the [Congregational Health Network](#) in Tennessee, a collaboration between hospitals, congregations throughout the mid-South, and community health organizations. It offers an effective model to screen and then triage individuals to agencies that can help.

Strategies Specific to Those in Faith Communities (cont'd)

- **Educate funders to see the church as a viable option for delivering services.**
- **Include the faith community in treatment team partnerships when requested by the person being engaged.**
- **Foster partnerships between faith communities and public health and/or housing agencies to provide shelter during inclement weather.**

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth

- **Engage young people earlier**, when they are in their teens and before they transition out of the children's mental health system.
- Where and when appropriate, **connect youth with transition-age housing**.
- **Engage youth peers in community services**. Peers may ease fears about discrimination and the effects of negative stereotypes about people with mental health issues.

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth (cont'd)

- **Invest in programs that teach self-advocacy and self-determination.** Model programs exist that are founded on such values as belonging, mastery, and independence; freedom of choice; and the ability to succeed on your own. Examples include:
 - [Response Ability Pathways](#) and other programs offered by Reclaiming Youth International
 - [Circles of Courage](#)

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth (cont'd)

- **Connect young people with juvenile justice-sponsored education and mentoring programs that focus on career.** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's peer-led [Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program \(RAMP\)](#) provides high-tech career mentoring for youth.
- **Encourage [shared decision-making](#) for youth and their providers.** Even the playing field between the provider and youth receiving services by giving youth a say in treatment plans and strategies to move forward.

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth (cont'd)

- **Adopt a trauma-informed approach**, which seeks to understand a person's life view and help them make informed choices.
- **At every level of youth-serving systems, establish partnerships to engage young people** in any capacity that does not trivialize their contributions but rather values their voice and experience.
- When appropriate, enlist **mental health courts** to work with youth aging out of the foster care system and youth in adult prisons.

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth (cont'd)

- **Provide incentives designed to appeal to young people.** Design engagement activities tailored for youth, because young people's motivation is different from adults. Today's youth live in a social media and technology – i.e., texting, Facebook, and online forums – and may not come into clinics for treatment services.

Strategies Specific to Transitional Age Youth (cont'd)

- **Design and distribute outreach and engagement materials for youth in formats that appeal to this population.** Suggestions include:
 - A plain-language handbook that explains an individual's rights under systems such as foster care. The handbook might be designed as a mobile app.
 - Materials to which young people can relate, in media they can access, to convey information about what positive mental health looks like and the challenges and steps in achieving it.
 - Culturally competent ways to speak to young people about their medication choices.

Strategies Specific to Older Adults

- **Train people who are not specialty providers to identify mental health concerns.** Outreach models developed in New Hampshire and Baltimore rely on personnel from senior centers and Meals on Wheels, many of whom are retirees.
- **Scale up programs to train people on community living skills.**
- **Establish a system of support services to allow older adults to age in the community, in a home-like environment where older adults are not ‘warehoused’.** Mom-and-Pop private homes, for example, represent an asset offering options for people to live in congregate settings.
- **Disseminate information on best practices for caregivers and advanced planning.**

Summary

- **Global changes are needed to better engage and serve people with serious mental illness:**
 - Give mental health interests a seat at policy and planning tables.
 - Increase funding for outreach and engagement activities such as developing a practice model featuring a reimbursement system that allows the engagement relationship to begin when a person recognizes it's needed and wants to engage.
 - Recruit advocates and champions.
 - Increase data collection. Metrics are needed to determine the effectiveness and impact of engagement strategies for people with serious mental illness.
 - Use a theory of change model to broadly disseminate programs and practices that work.

Examples of Successful Models and Practices

- A New York City model, [The Door](#), provides health, dental, and employment services in addition to mental health services.
- Tennessee's [TennCare](#) requires reinvestment of profits in innovative practices and programs. Once an agency gets a toehold with use of dollars from innovative services, and a track record and evaluation that confirms good outcomes, practices can be scaled up.
- **Vermont** uses global savings from its Medicaid waiver to fund a rental assistance system.
- **Arkansas** measures family engagement in treatment by asking that a family member sign the treatment plan.

For More Information

Contact:

Keris Jän Myrick, M.B.A., M.S.

Director Office of Consumer Affairs,

Center for Mental Health Services

email: keris.myrick@samhsa.hhs.gov

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